

Sketch

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Article 5

Choice

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Choice

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Abstract

How do you, then, propose to compromise? Is it not that from a high place you have seen yourself and not known-...

He fell upon it, tearing the netting and throwing all movable objects helter skelter. When there was nothing more to throw, he ran blindly into a tree covered with vines, clutching, tearing. It was but a few steps to the lake; he stumbled into it and fell sobbing. He rubbed the cool mud into his eyes, genitals, all over his body. This relief, too, was only temporary. The burning and itching returned until he could no longer sit still. Dimly, he could see light through his puffed eyes. Slowly he crawled out of the water towards the collapsed shelter. The mud stung furiously where he had rubbed it into the open sores. He came to the tarp. A trembling, swollen hand slid underneath and grasped cool steel. He withdrew the weapon and for a few seconds sat fondling it. Then there was a click, a dull crack, and silence.

"Why don't we look on the island?" asked the deputy.

"Nobody been on that island since Johnny Brooker went to the hospital, five, six years ago. On the island berry pickin' he was. Spent two months in the hospital," replied the sheriff.

"Yeh, but why did he go to the hospital?"

"That island is a growin' hell. See the green stuff on the ground, an' the vines on the tree trunks?" asked the sheriff. "Poison ivy, every bit of it. Nope, nobody on that island. Damned green growin' hell, it is."

—Richard Handy, ME



CHOICE

How do you, then, propose to compromise?
Is it not that from a high place you have seen yourself
and not known—
And that from a higher place you have seen yourself
watch yourself,
and have been a stranger?

Is it thus, that in the frame of essence you have seen
yourself as a peeling onion,
Of which the last layer reveals nothing?

Or is it, that hearing a hollow wind in the East, you are seen
as an onion whole,
To be bitterly sliced and eaten?

—Richard Ellis, E.E., Sr.